

## Jeffords wants tighter controls on nuclear fuel storage

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WASHINGTON -- Sen. James Jeffords, I-Vt., wants to ensure that the state's nuclear power plant doesn't lose any more radioactive fuel rods.

Jeffords, the ranking minority member of the Environment and Public Works Committee, introduced legislation Tuesday that would enhance oversight of spent fuel rods at the nation's 103 nuclear power plants.

"This bill will be an important step towards improving security related to one of the most hazardous materials made by humans -- spent nuclear fuel," Jeffords said in a press release.

He added that his plan would reduce the possibility that dangerous fuel rods, a potential weapon for terrorists, would not end up "in the wrong hands."

The bill is cosponsored by Sen. Patrick Leahy, D-Vt. U.S. Rep. Bernard Sanders, I-Vt., introduced identical legislation in the House.

The Yankee plant in Vernon lost track of two spent fuel rods for three months in 2004. They were discovered in a container located in the plant's spent fuel pool.

The plant is owned by Entergy Nuclear, which has corporate offices in Brattleboro.

Jeffords' bill would require the Nuclear Regulatory Commission to establish strict plans for fuel storage, conduct annual inspections at plants and increase the commission's reporting on misplaced fuel rods.